

Pre-apprentice carpentry program helps build lives

To see him at the job site, Devon Ishmael looks like any construction worker – in hardhat, work boots and gloves as he expertly moves materials with a small frontloading Bobcat. But, thanks to an innovative George Brown program, what you can't see is that Ishmael is helping build much more than condos and townhouses in the redevelopment of Regent Park off Parliament Street – he's building a new life. For himself, his family, and his community.

Ishmael grew up in Regent Park and for a while seemed destined for something other than a well-paying steady job and the ability to care for his family. Or as he describes his journey: "I went from tearing it down, to school, to building it up."

It's been two years since he graduated from a new George Brown program that gave him a foot in the door in the construction industry, two years since he's been working for Daniels Corporation in Regent Park, and two years since his daughter was born.

Now he's interested in becoming an apprentice so he can do more skilled work and earn more. "I'm going to get my full education," he says. "I'm going to know how to bring down a building how to put up a building."

But his ability to see and create a future wasn't always there.

Devon Ishmael was born in Guyana. When he was nine years old, his family came to North America. When they arrived in Grand Prairie, Alberta, it was so different than the world he had always known, Devon thought that he had arrived on another planet. After adjusting to life in Canada, Devon settled in to a normal childhood. He enjoyed school and liked playing basketball. In 2003, the family moved to Regent Park in Toronto.

Living in Regent Park, Devon was an average high school student. In his last year of high school, he struggled with some of his subjects but with a lot of effort, he was able to graduate. In his spare time, he hung around in the community. It was in this community that he experienced difficulties and challenges that made him feel like he was going nowhere.

Devon had always thought that if he met the right people and got the right kind of training, his luck and



Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program grad Devon Ishmael has been building a new life thanks to a steady construction job helping redevelop Regent Park.

his life would change. This was what happened to him through the pre-apprenticeship in carpentry program which was delivered in partnerships with George Brown's Office of Special Projects and Community Partnerships, Apprenticeship Programs, and five community agencies in the Downtown East Collective.

Devon heard about the Pre-Apprenticeship training and employment program that the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNi) had just started offering in partnership with George Brown. He walked into the RPNi office, told a staff person his story and decided to fill out an application form. After his initial assessment, Devon was accepted to the program.

Through the Pre-Apprenticeship in Carpentry program, Devon learned all sorts of new things: The carpentry work was something that he had

expected to learn, but what he didn't expect was the opportunity to learn about himself, and about other people. Throughout the program, Devon used the resources that were available to him – his professors, the people on the program team and his job coach. Devon says his "job coach" was great. She helped me with everything. She was like a friend but she knew a lot of information. I felt like I could discuss anything with her."

Devon's positive experience is not unusual, says Office of Special Projects and Community Partnerships Director Brenda Pipitone. George Brown is working with many community partners to create new opportunities. "This is just one of the many projects that have built brighter futures for community residents and integrated George Brown College into the fabric of the city of Toronto," she says.

George Brown culinary skill helps create a "soup kitchen" revolution

They still make soup, but they aren't called soup kitchens anymore. In the field of feeding the poor and homeless, they're now called drop-in centres and Toronto has 50 of them serving vital meals to thousands of people every day.

The basic routine hasn't changed in 100 years: people looking for a decent meal wait outside for the doors to open. Then they file into what is usually a bland, noisy room to pick up some food cafeteria-style or sit at a long table where they are served.

But what is changing now, with George Brown's help, is the food the drop-in centres are serving. The college's Office of Special Projects and Community Partnerships is working with Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts, the City of Toronto's public health and shelter support departments, and two food charities to make sure drop-in centre clients get tasty as well as nutritious meals.

Chef and George Brown Continuing Education culinary teacher Stephen Field created three easy-to-prepare and versatile dishes – Minestrone Soup, Bolognese pasta sauce, and Pork Goulash – that drop-in centre cooks can prepare using the materials they have on hand. The meals are designed so that the cooks can substitute meats or vegetables as required.

In late October the college hosted more than 30 cooks from 17 of the city's drop-in centres for a day-long training session where they learned new techniques and tried the new recipes they'll be preparing for their clients.

Cooking for a drop-in centre requires a degree of creativity that could intimidate many professional chefs. Drop-ins usually have small food budgets and rely heavily on donations – either food that's dropped on their doorsteps or delivered by charities such as the Daily Bread Food Bank or Second Harvest, both of whom participated in the first phase of the six-month pilot project. The cooks must then craft a meal out of what they have, and understandably those meals have often been protein, nutrient and calorie deficient.

Bob Jackson has worked at Toronto drop-in centres for 20 years, and remembers what made a meal five years ago: "Where I was before it was soup and a sandwich." Low-protein, low-nutrient meals like that often left drop-in clients lethargic and irritable because many were quickly hungry again. To make matters worse, the drop-in centre usually provides what is the only meal of the day for many clients.

Now, as co-ordinator of the Christian Resource Centre drop-in in Regent Park, Jackson helps prepare a hot



George Brown Continuing Education Chef and teacher Stephen Field (right) talks cooking technique with Bob Jackson, co-ordinator of a drop-in centre at the Christian Resource Centre in Regent Park. The Centre serves a hot mid-day meal to between 110 and 350 people a day. It now follows higher quality nutrition standards and uses tasty recipes created by Field.

lunch for as many as 350 people a day. On this day it's a generous portion of fresh-baked ham or, for those who would prefer or whose diets demand, a Cornish game hen. Drop-in centre cooks he says, like restaurant or institutional chefs, must adapt their menus for their changing clients – some of whom have religious dietary restrictions or food allergies.

On the wall of the Christian Resource Centre's small kitchen is a "plate guide" showing how many calories, and what proportions of protein, vegetables and

other nutrients should be served at each meal. The guide, which was used by Field as the basis for his recipes, is a product of the first phase of the project, which studied the food that came out of drop-in kitchens, developed recommendations, and then used city and agency funding to supplement existing food sources – adding dairy products, meat and fresh fruits and vegetables. The result? a recent study found drop-in clients are happier and there are fewer behavioral incidents in the centres that are part of the 6-month pilot program.



HOSPITALITY BUILDING OPEN HOUSE IS A RUNWAY SUCCESS! Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts Dean John Walker (centre) strides down the red-carpeted runway with professors Donna Lee (left in photo) and Doris Miculan Bradley (right in photo), dressed as maids as the final models in a hospitality fashion show at the Centre's open house on Oct. 28. The fashion show also featured celebrity chefs, including TV host and George Brown grad Christine Cushing as well as students modeling hospitality uniforms and working clothes. Visitors to the building at 300 Adelaide St. E. and the new training restaurant – The Chef's House – at 215 King St. E. had a chance to take tours, sample cooking and explore the new and renovated facilities.



FASHION GRADUATES WIN POST-GRAD PROGRAMS IN MILAN – School of Fashion and Creative Technologies chat Marilyn McNeil-Morin (left) chats with bursary-winning Fashion Techniques and Design program graduate Sarah Stevenson at a special reception during L'Oréal Fashion week in Toronto in October. Stevenson is wearing the dress she created that won her a year-long post-graduate program at a Milan, Italy worth \$22,000. Another George Brown student, Anna Lisa Maniglia, won a two-year program at another Milan fashion school. The bursaries and competition were sponsored by the Milan fashion schools, The Italian Chamber of Commerce of Toronto, and the Fashion Design Council of Canada. The three student winners, who also included a Ryerson University student, were chosen by a panel led by Fashion Design Council President Robin Kay.

Theatre grad wins \$100,000 prize as leading playwright

Toronto playwright and George Brown Theatre grad Daniel MacIvor has been given Canada's biggest theatre award – the \$100,000 Siminovitch Prize.

MacIvor is widely recognized in Canadian theatre, having written nearly 20 plays and won several prizes, including the 2006 Governor General's award for drama. He is also an acclaimed screenwriter and filmmaker. MacIvor says he's using some of the prize money to pay debts but also gave \$25,000 to help two emerging Vancouver playwrights. "Everyone I know who works full-time in the arts is carrying a considerable amount of debt," says MacIvor.

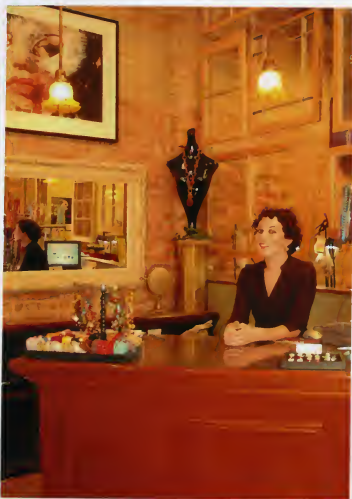


Born in Cape Breton, N.S., MacIvor graduated from George Brown's Theatre Arts program in 1985, as well as the drama program at

Dalhousie University in Halifax. In his acceptance speech in late October, he said that the Siminovitch prize — first introduced in 2001 and dedicated to scientist Lou Siminovitch and his late wife, Elinore, a playwright — reminded him of the ability of theatre to affect people. "It has the power," he said, "to transform the lives of audiences, who come into dark rooms by their minds and their hearts open, who are filled with questions, and who find a moment of peace in the presence of something innately familiar."

Recognizing direction, play-writing and design in three-year cycles, the prize recipient was decided by a jury from a total of 26 nominees. MacIvor intends to continue writing and travelling across the country. "My dream," he said, "is for us to live in a world where there's a theatre in every neighbourhood."

Premier's Award Nominee: Grad opens studio/gallery to promote Toronto jewellery designers



Jewellery Arts graduate Sarah Hamel created a studio and store where emerging designers could create and sell their work. Hamel, who is also President of the Ontario Metal Arts Guild, has been nominated for a Premier's Award as an outstanding college graduate.

Sarah Hamel is promoting a generation of Toronto jewellery designers as an entrepreneur who opened an innovative gallery and studio where they can show and sell their work.

The George Brown Jewellery Arts graduate owns and operates Made You Look Jewellery Studio and Gallery. The innovative venue features a gallery in front, displaying and selling the creations of over 100 Toronto jewellery designers, and a studio in back, where self-employed jewellery artists rent work benches and share expensive equipment.

Hamel has intentionally stepped back from her own design work in order to support and promote the work of other Toronto jewellery designers. She also encourages new talent with

the Made You Look Entrepreneur Award presented each year to a Jewellery Arts graduate at George Brown. The recipient receives free use of a bench at Made You Look for three months — worth \$1,350 — helping launch his or her career.

Hamel also serves as President of the 60-year-old Metal Arts Guild of Canada, which she continues to revitalize and energize, increasing membership, launching a new interactive website and establishing the first-ever national head office.

Her passion for new jewellery design emerged at George Brown.

Hamel was 21 and unsure what to do with her life when she enrolled in Jewellery Arts in 1999. "It was mostly

a process of elimination. My parents were willing to pay for school "now," so I decided I better pick something and give it a try — how bad could jewellery-making be? Over the next three years, while learning the technical skills of making jewellery, Hamel's entrepreneurial talents began to emerge. "I knew my classmates intended to run their own businesses, but I knew how difficult and expensive that is, and I was afraid many of them wouldn't make it. I felt there was a need for a creation facility and retail outlet to get the talent to the market." That's when she came up with the idea of setting up a business where she would rent studio space to a community of jewellery artists and sell their work onsite, leaving them free to focus on designing.

After graduating in 2001, Hamel bought and renovated a rundown building on Queen Street West in Parkdale and opened Made You Look.

A year after opening, she established the Made You Look Entrepreneurial Award for a George Brown grad as a way to encourage new talent while also giving back to the college. Hamel has high praise for the quality of training that students receive at George Brown, which is demonstrated by the fact that 12 of her in-house designers are George Brown grads. "When someone says they're from George Brown, I know right away the quality of training they've had."

In her first year in business, Hamel was nominated for the annual ARC (Achievement in new Retail Concepts) Award. The award, presented by the Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited, honours retail innovation and is considered to be the most prestigious award in the industry. Hamel also appears as a jewellery specialist on the CBC television show *Steven and Chris*.

Sarah Hamel is one of five George Brown graduates nominated by the college for 2008 Premier's Awards. Winners of the awards will be announced in February, 2009. George Brown News will publish a profile of each nominee in the coming months.

President Anne Sado



With headlines related to the worldwide financial crisis appearing daily in the news media, many of you may be

thinking about the current economic situation and its implications for George Brown College. Amidst all of the uncertainty, there is little doubt that Ontario is weathering one of its worst economic storms in recent memory.

The recent Fall economic statement from Finance Minister Dwight Duncan spoke to the magnitude of the problem and its impact. It included a \$500 million budget deficit for the province this year, a delay in the hiring of 9,000 new nurses and 50 family health teams, and uncertainty about the impact on transfer payments (from which Ontario's colleges receive their operating grants).

George Brown College is in the enviable position of having a solid financial base, thanks to strong enrollments and our ongoing commitment to manage our resources in alignment with our strategic plan. But we are facing uncertainty in the near term. The existing provincial college funding formula was an "interim" one. A new formula is being developed for 09-10 and beyond. The Reaching Higher Plan is entering its final year, and we don't know the resource allocation to the college sector.

In this environment, GBC must remain focused on doing all it can to ensure accountability and linking our investments with outcomes. This means ongoing prioritization in spending and even more critical challenge of the decisions we have to make. Fortunately, with our Academic

Strategy in place and a strong record of maximizing the return from scarce resources, I am confident in our ability to maintain the College's overall direction and stay focused on our strategic objectives.

In fact, as this economic condition persists, GBC will play an increasingly important role as part of its solution. Historically, enrolment demand has increased during times of economic uncertainty. And industry demand for skilled graduates will remain strong well into the foreseeable future, as larger trends continue to shape the key sectors supported by the College. In hospitality, there remains an estimated shortage of 300,000 workers nationally, and despite the most recent announcement regarding nurses, an aging labour force is still forecasted to leave us with a shortage of health professionals. Even in the face of a slowing real estate market, construction professionals are likely to find their skills in demand when it inevitably becomes time to address the national infrastructure deficit.

Because of these persistent demands, current economic uncertainty only raises the importance of our role in ensuring a ready supply of skilled graduates for when they are needed the most. As Ontario's economy continues to undergo its longer term transition, GBC will also support this through programs such as the Second Career program which provides retraining opportunities for recently laid-off workers to learn new skills and move into new careers.

With the existing dedication and focus of our staff, I am confident that GBC will be able to continue delivering the best possible training to our students in order to provide the best possible graduates to the industries we support.



CELEBRITY CHEF: George Brown graduate and TV chef Christine Cushing walks the red carpet, accompanied by a current student in a graduation robe, at the Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts open house on October 28. For more info see photo on page 2.

GREEN SPOT

Did you know:

George Brown College has approximately 2,400 computers, including for staff, faculty and in student labs. Assuming a 150-watt CPU uses approx. 900 kWh of electricity per year if left on continuously for 250 days in a year.

That means the College's computers and monitors are consuming just over 2 million kWh (10% of the College's total electricity consumption) and generating over 450 metric tonnes of green house gases annually.

Check all electric and electronic equipment in your office or work area and make sure it's off before you leave for the day.

That includes computers, monitors, printers, photocopiers, fax machines – and of course lights. While some equipment goes into a power-saving "sleep" mode it is still drawing and wasting energy all night long – so switch the power off completely. Powering down equipment reduces pollution-creating energy generation.



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